

Understanding the Times: First Semester Exam Study Guide

- Upon what 2 things should a Christian worldview be based? **Jesus and the Bible**
- Define *metanarrative*. **A big story explaining all of reality**
- In what two ways does our worldview relate to the world? **It describes what we think the world is like and what we think it should be like**
- What is the key worldview principle? **Ideas have consequences**
- What requirement necessarily accompanies our beliefs? **Why you believe what you believe**
- What false separations have contributed to anti-intellectualism in the church?

The separation of faith and reason

the separation of the sacred and the secular

- What is the minimum unit of bible reading? Why?
A paragraph is the minimum unit of reading because you can only understand the bible by reading it in context.
- In the discussion of ideas, with what two phrases should we become comfortable?
**I could be wrong
that's a good point**
- How should we deal with Christianity's offensive nature?
Christianity is offensive enough. Don't add anymore offense to it. But we dare not remove the offense inherent in the gospel.

Christian Theology

- God is supernatural (beyond the natural)
- God is trinity (three-in-one—called *Trinitarian monotheism*)
 - Father
 - Son
 - Holy Spirit
- God is sovereign (He does not have to seek permission or approval)
- God is moral (in the struggle between right and wrong, he is always right)
- God is longsuffering (He puts up with a lot of junk in this world because he has granted us free will and allows to reap the consequences of it.)
- God is patient (This is different from longsuffering. Being patient, he can wait.)
- God is faithful (He is always there.)

- God is powerful (In fact, he is *omnipotent*—all-powerful.)
- Sources of knowledge about God—revelation
 - General—God’s communication about his presence and power
 - Special—God’s more specific communication about his character and will
- How does one “please God?”
 - Confess sinfulness and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
 - Ephesians 2:8-9—For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - Learn to live in accordance with the principles of the Bible

Islamic Theology

- God is supernatural (beyond the natural)
- God is one (Unitarian monotheism)
 - There is no trinity
 - Christians are viewed as *polytheistic* (believing in more than one God)
 - *Shirk*—the one unforgivable sin in Islam—associating partners with God
- Similarities between Islamic and Christian theism
 - God exists
 - God created everything.
 - God has revealed his will through prophets.
 - All humans are accountable for sin.
- Islam views itself as the fulfillment of Christianity just as Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism.
- Sources of knowledge
 - **Qur’an**—Islam’s holy book. Muslims believe it to be the most accurate and final revelation from God. It was revealed to Muhammad—the final prophet of humanity.
 - **Hadith**—The recorded teachings, rulings, and actions of Muhammad as recorded by his early associates. Muslims believe they are inspired by God and are to be obeyed.
 - **Sunna**—The works of noted scholars of Islam (both Muslim and non-Muslim)
- How does one please God?
 - **Islam’s 5 pillars**
 - **Confession of faith**—“There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.” (If a person makes this confession with a sincere heart and mind, then he/she is a Muslim.)

- **Prayer**—Muslims are expected to pray five times a day facing Mecca. On Fridays, Muslim men (and sometimes women) are expected to attend noon prayers at a Mosque.
- **Fasting**—This is done during the month of Ramadan. It involves abstinence from food, smoking, and sex during daylight hours.
- **Almsgiving**—Muslims are to give 2.5% of their annual income to help the poor.
- **Pilgrimage**—All Muslims are expected to travel to Mecca once in their lifetime if their health and finances allow them to do so.

Possible 6th Pillar

- Jihad
 - The battle against temptation and sin for the sake of self-control.
 - The battle against any and all who oppose Islam.
- There is no guarantee of salvation.

Cosmic Humanist (New Age Movement) Theology

- **Pantheism:** All that exists is God; God is all that exists.
 - God is a cosmic force not a personal God.
 - Each person is God (can get in touch with his/her inner godhood)
 - Truth is discovered by inner soul-searching (meditation).
- **Reincarnation:** After death, we are reborn and live another life. This cycle repeats itself many times. You have certain challenges to face and overcome in this lifetime. If you don't learn your lessons this time, you'll get them again.
- **Karma:** The good and bad deeds that we do add and subtract from our accumulated record, our karma. At the end of our life, we are rewarded or punished according to our karma by being reincarnated into either a painful or good new life. This belief is linked to that of reincarnation.
- It is characterized by an individual approach to spiritual practices while rejecting religious doctrine and dogma.

Secular Humanist Theology

- Defining Secular Humanism
 - *Secular*—of or pertaining to worldly things or to things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred; temporal (*temporal*—pertaining to or concerned with the present life or this world)
 - *Humanism*—the belief that humanity is the highest of all beings and truth and knowledge rest in **science** and **human reason**

- Atheism—there is no God
 - The supernatural (anything outside of nature) does not exist.
 - “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God; nature not deity....we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.” (*Humanist Manifesto II*)
 - Humanity is the supreme authority.

Marxist-Leninist Theology

- Defining Marxism and Marxism-Leninism
 - *Marxism*
the system of economic and political thought developed by Karl Marx, along with Friedrich Engels, especially the doctrine that the state throughout history has been a device for the exploitation of the masses by a dominant class, that class struggle has been the main source of historical change, and that the capitalist system will inevitably (after the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat) be superseded by a socialist order and a classless society.
(*proletariat*—the class of workers, especially industrial wage earners, who do not possess capital or property and must sell their labor to survive¹)
 - *Marxism-Leninism*
The doctrines of Marxism as applied by Lenin (a founder of the Soviet Union) to the building of Marxist nations. With Karl Marx, Lenin called for a classless society in which all means of production would be commonly owned (communism). Unlike some Marxists, however, Lenin stressed bold, revolutionary action and insisted that a strong Communist party would be needed in a Marxist nation to direct the efforts of the workers. Lenin also argued that capitalist nations resort to aggressive moves as they decline and that Marxist nations must therefore be prepared for war. Eventually, rigid governmental structures will not be necessary
- Atheism
 - Humanity is God. Humanity created God in its own image and created religion in order to worship itself.
 - Mankind must take control of reality and shape it as he sees fit.

¹ <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/chapter-2.htm>

- “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature; the sentiment of a heartless world....It is the opium of the masses.” (Karl Marx)
 - Marxism is “positively hostile to all religion.” (Vladimir Lenin)
- Marxism and Atheism
 - To be a Marxist means to be atheist.
 - To be a good Marxist means spreading atheism.
- To be the best Marxist means to strive to eradicate all religious sentiment.
- Postmodernist Theology
 - Pre-modern to Post-modern eras
 - In the pre-modern era God, revelation, and the clergy were the ultimate sources about reality.
 - In the modern era science and reason were the ultimate sources about reality.
 - In the post-modern era the ultimate sources about reality are one’s culture, friends, and preferences.
 - A skeptical movement
 - Skeptical of absolute truth
 - Skeptical of a foundation for knowledge (ultimately words are not loaded with meaning, they are merely interpreted by individuals)
 - Skeptical of all metanarratives (big stories explaining all of reality)
- Atheism
 - Religious beliefs are merely matters of personal preference (as opposed to actually being true or false)
 - *Religious pluralism*—we must be tolerant of all religious beliefs because no one religion can be true.
 - Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are not tolerated because they dare to make exclusive truth claims.
- Deconstruction
 - Words and sentences have no inherent meaning.
 - The author’s intent means nothing in light of the reader’s interpretation.
- What does all knowing require? faith
- **Define epistemology.** the study of knowledge
- **What can a Christian view as a wise, but limited, ally?** the scientific method
- **Define metaphysics.** the study of ultimate reality
- **Define cosmology.** the study of the structure, origin, and design of the universe

- **Define *ontology*.** the study of the existence of being
- **What does the cosmos manifest at every level?** order and rationality that can be only be explained as a deliberate, creative act of God
- **Define *Necessary Being*.** It is a being that cannot *not* exist.
- **Upon what are the philosophical positions of Secular Humanism based?** science
- **What is the core tenet for each of Secular Humanism's philosophical positions?**
the material (physical) world is all that exists
- **Define *naturalism*.**
the belief that reality made up of matter alone and that all things can be explained by natural causes
- **Explain the difference between *true belief* and knowledge.**
True belief is things we expect to be true but have not yet been proven by investigation and evidence.
Knowledge is the body of those things that have been proven empirically.
- **What are the roots of the contemporary Cosmic Humanist movement?**
the Romantic poets of the 1800s
- **Define *non-naturalism*.** Nothing is natural. Everything is supernatural or spiritual.
- **Explain the epistemology of Cosmic Humanism.**
Each person finds his/her own truth by looking within themselves.
- **According to Cosmic Humanism, what is truth?** It is a feeling or an experience.
- **What is Cosmic Humanism's ultimate reality?** God-force or Christ-consciousness
- **For Cosmic Humanist's what is the purpose of knowing?**
It is not to explain or describe reality. Rather it is good for experience with is actually getting in touch with one's godhood.
- **What is the difference between Truth and truths?**
Truth = universal truth (true for all people, at all times, everywhere)
truths = accepted ideas of a society or group of people
- **Define *anti-realism*.**
the belief that reality is subjectively built by human thought (reality is what you make it)
- **Define *correspondence theory of truth*.** the belief that truth directly relates to reality